

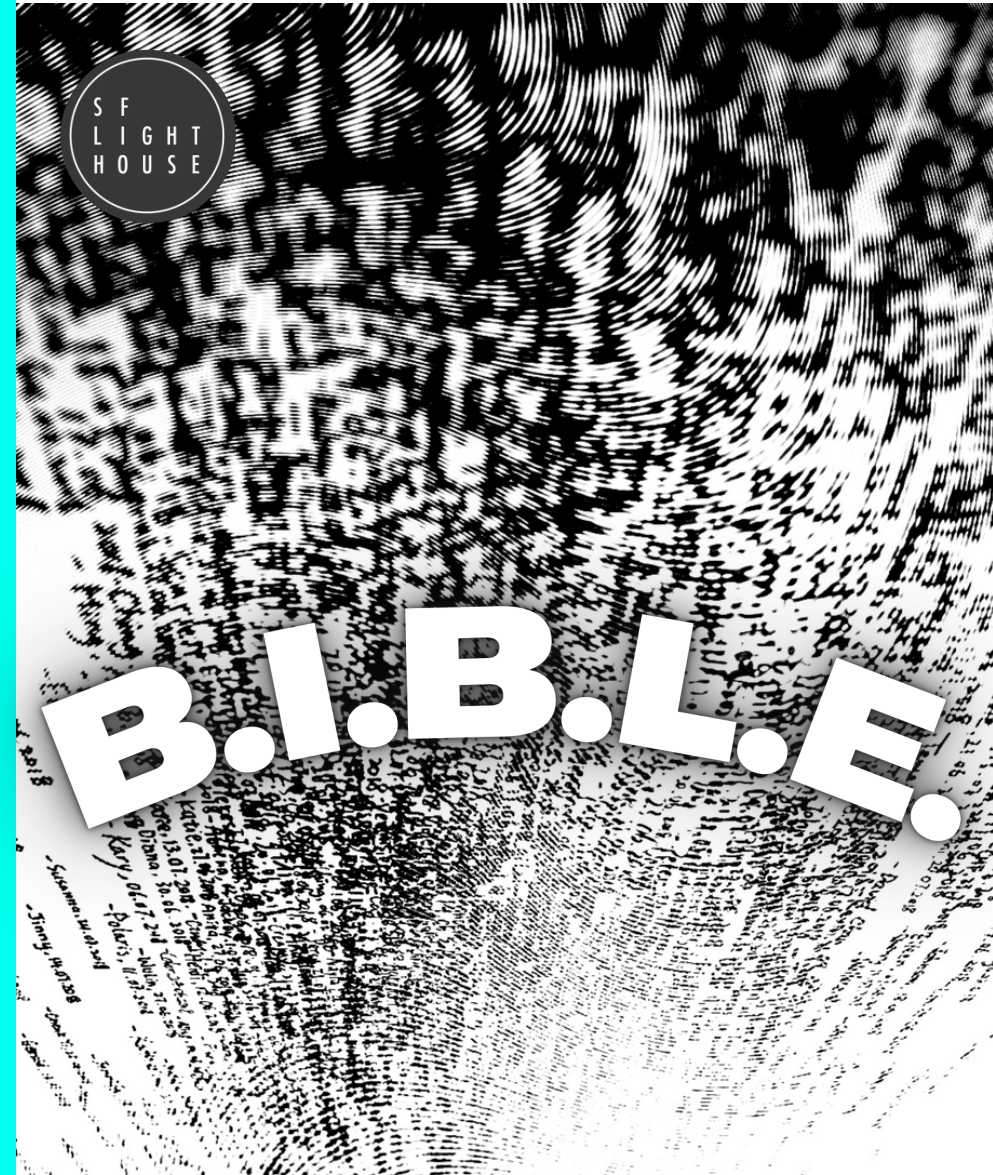


Art

Art communicates to our limbic brain/emotional intelligence center and it speaks things that words can't say. When it's good, art frees us from the prison of words, articulation, and vocabulary into a world of meaning without words, understanding without rationalizations, and truth without facts. It can influence our decisions, our perspectives, and our sense of "aha" or wonder. Each week I select an artwork that helps me communicate the truth I can't convey in words. Great art communicates more than the artist's intention, it's universal in its message and resonates with different people and in different ways, it hits the archetypes and universal human story we are captivated by.

The **Charging Bull** of Wallstreet was placed in front of Wall Street in the wake of Black Monday (1987) by Arturo Di Modica as a way of communicating optimism in the face of the economic crisis. For some justice seekers, it triggered feelings of the oppression of capitalism upon disadvantaged people. Some went as far as to remind Wall Street of the golden calf of materialism that tempted Israel to put their faith in gold and money and worship it as the means to promise. The Occupy Wallstreet movement interpreted the bull as such. In 2017 Kristen Visbel placed **The Fearless Girl** art installation in front of the Charging Bull to communicate the message of female empowerment vis-a-vis the gender inequality that exists on Wall Street. Upset, Modica demanded it be removed which resulted in its relocation, but not before it sent a powerful message.

The art installation, in addition to Visbel's message, communicates something else to me, I experience the authority and courage of Bat Kol (Daughter of the Voice) in the face of the intimidating forces of culture, money, politics, and violence. I see the "still small voice" unmoveable before the fire, wind, and earthquake, outlasting in its youthful and girlish manner and the powerbrokers of today's world. *And she is empowering me to stand, to face-off, to be brave and be real.*



**YOU [RELIGIOUS ELITE] HAVE NEVER HEARD HIS VOICE NOR SEEN HIS FORM AT ANY TIME, 38 NOR DO YOU HAVE HIS WORD RESIDING IN YOU, BECAUSE YOU DO NOT BELIEVE THE ONE WHOM HE SENT. 39 YOU STUDY THE SCRIPTURES THOROUGHLY BECAUSE YOU THINK IN THEM YOU POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE, AND IT IS THESE SAME SCRIPTURES THAT TESTIFY ABOUT ME, 40 BUT YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO COME TO ME SO THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE. - JOHN 5**





## 1 Kings 19:11-13

**Lectio Divina.** Today we read a Scripture that uses, for the first time, "the name of the Lord" as the object of worship. Its a short portion of Scripture but well worth sitting with.

**Lectio (Imagine):** Read the Scripture (3x's). On the third reading highlight the word or phrase that sticks out to you.

**Oratio (Feel):** After your reading session, pray and express your feelings to God about the word or phrase that stuck out to you. This could include your desires, confessions, questions, gratitudes, or resistance.

**Meditatio (Think):** Do you have any questions for God? What questions do you have of yourself? I intentionally ask myself tough questions from what I read in order to uncover the truth of my heart. Did you experience any insight, knowledge, wisdom, vision, or sense of action to take? Write all of this down

**Contemplatio (Be Still):** Sit quietly for 5 minutes. Just being in God's presence. Don't try to think, feel, or will anything simply let yourself be in God's Presence. These words have brought you into the very presence of God.

## בת קול

Bat Kol (daughter of the Voice) is the rabbinic descriptor for the voice of God, which comes gentle, like silence, it is often the voice and message of the silence. In Judeo-Christian tradition, anything The Eternal speaks into time takes on a life of its own, which is the case with the Voice. The Voice comes alive as the Eternal's daughter.

What we have recorded in places like Jesus baptismal waters and in Peter's vision of unclean animals is the Bat Kol. Both the wisdom of God and the voice are presented as feminine qualities of the Divine, which is often why men have such a difficult time responding appropriately and women get it right.

In all of Scripture, the most perfect mortal is Mary, and it's seen in both how she hears and responds to the Bat Kol.

After the Voice says she will carry the Christ child she responds to the Bat Kol with, "Amen, may your word to me be fulfilled."

*Make a List of your weekly desires.*

*Make a List of your weekly gratitudes.*

*Make of list of your weekly cares and anxieties.*



### The Jesus Prayer

The Jesus Prayer is a prayer of silence. It's a way of bathing all your desires, distractions, gratitudes, and anxieties--frankly anything that comes into your mind in Jesus' name.

Set your timer for 10-minutes.

Breath in slowly and out slowly . . .

Now say the name of Jesus breaking it up with inhales and exhales . . . over and over and over . . . in love, in devotion, in loyalty, in gratitude . . .

As thoughts, feelings, and desires, come up simply whisper the name of Jesus over them, bathing them in the light of God's name.

You will do this throughout the duration of the practice . . .

When the timer goes off, say the Lord's Prayer.



## 2 Timothy 3:10-16

**Lectio Divina.** Today we focus on the awe-inspiring power and the sacred mystery of the name of God.

**Lectio (Imagine):** Read the Scripture (3x's). On the third reading highlight the word or phrase that sticks out to you.

**Oratio (Feel):** After your reading session, pray and express your feelings to God about the word or phrase that stuck out to you. This could include your desires, confessions, questions or gratitudes, resistance or supplications.

**Meditatio (Think):** Do you have any questions for God? What questions do you have of yourself? I intentionally ask myself tough questions from what I read in order to uncover the truth of my heart. Did you experience any insight, knowledge, wisdom, vision, or sense of action to take? Write all of this down

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What does it mean that Scriptures are inspired (theopneustos)? God-spirited, as in God-breathed; it is breathed out of God's heart and breathed into our hearts. The Bible is breathing out a message of our belovedness and we are to breathe this in. The message is to inspire change, and encourage us. If it's not causing life within us and around us then we are not reading it rightly. People who read it and act arrogant, bigoted, judgmental, and holier-than-thou are not breathing it in. They are merely skimming words, stocking knowledge, assuring their sense of rightness, and making darkness out of the light. This is easy to do, and at some point, we are all guilty.

## Psalter 19th Division

1-2 God's glory is on tour in the skies,  
God-craft on exhibit across the horizon.  
Madame Day holds classes every morning,  
Professor Night lectures each evening.

3-4 Their words aren't heard,  
their voices aren't recorded,  
But their silence fills the earth:  
unspoken truth is spoken everywhere.

4-5 God makes a huge dome  
for the sun—a superdome!  
The morning sun's a new husband  
leaping from his honeymoon bed,  
The daybreaking sun an athlete  
racing to the tape.

6 That's how God's Word vaults across the skies  
from sunrise to sunset,  
Melting ice, scorching deserts,  
warming hearts to faith.

7-9 The revelation of God is whole  
and pulls our lives together.

The signposts of God are clear  
and point out the right road.  
The life-maps of God are right,  
showing the way to joy.

The directions of God are plain  
and easy on the eyes.

God's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold,  
with a lifetime guarantee.

The decisions of God are accurate  
down to the nth degree.

10 God's Word is better than a diamond,  
better than a diamond set between emeralds.  
You'll like it better than strawberries in spring,  
better than red, ripe strawberries.

11-14 There's more: God's Word warns us of danger  
and directs us to hidden treasure.

Otherwise how will we find our way?  
Or know when we play the fool?

Clean the slate, God, so we can start the day fresh!  
Keep me from stupid sins,

from thinking I can take over your work;  
Then I can start this day sun-washed,  
scrubbed clean of the grime of sin.  
These are the words in my mouth;  
these are what I chew on and pray.

Accept them when I place them  
on the morning altar,  
O God, my Altar-Rock,  
God, Priest-of-My-Altar.



## 2 Peter 1:16-21

**Lectio Divina.** Today we focus on the revelation of the name of Jesus.

**Lectio (Imagine):** Read the Scripture (3x's). On the third reading highlight the word or phrase that sticks out to you.

**Oratio (Feel):** After your reading session, pray and express your feelings to God about the word or phrase that stuck out to you. This could include your desires, confessions, questions or gratitudes, resistance, or supplications.

**Meditatio (Think):** Do you have any questions for God? What questions do you have of yourself? I intentionally ask myself tough questions from what I read in order to uncover the truth of my heart. Did you experience any insight, knowledge, wisdom, vision, or sense of action to take? Write all of this down

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This text talks about the authority of a personal eye-witness experience, mingled with prophetic messages and then with the Holy Spirit's interpretive powers. These three realities: experience, Scripture, and Spirit are sustainable spiritual energies that connect us with reality and perseverance.

## Bible FAQ

### What is the Bible's unique contribution to history and the humanities?

1. The Hebrew Scriptures mark the beginning and invention of history.
2. The Psalms mark the first time in history where soliloquy and self-reflection are seen. Some argue it's the literature where humanity became a conscious self.
3. Rene Girard, literary critic and anthropologist says it is the only literature in antiquity that shows God(s) to be with the victim. All other history is written from the perspective of the victor and aligns the gods with the victors.
4. Real and honest. Its truth is in the fact that it never covers up its hero's flaws, weaknesses, and shortcomings. It just speaks about their truth and their belovedness despite their weakness. Moreover, it empowers the voice of the marginalized to the status of heroes by using their voices to carry its most important messages.
5. Rene Girard says it's the only piece of literature to expose the origins of violence in culture. (We compare, we copy, we compete, we conflict, we conspire, we condemn, and we crucify). The Bible contains the code for human evil as mimesis, followed by memetic contagion, and then scapegoating, and then sacred sacrifices. "The Bible is a text in travail," pregnant with the message that humanity is blinded with violence as the solution to everything. And the cross is the gross exposure of this human condition.
6. The Hebrew Testament reveals that God is with the victim. The Christian Scriptures go a step further in saying that God *is* the victim who is murdered.
7. In its historical-cultural context, it is radically progressive, pushing back at its cultures of slavery, human sacrifice, care for the poor, and immigrants, and inclusivity of everyone. Those that have followed its trajectory of thought into our time have brought about the societal change of free education for all, gender inclusivity, anti-racism, anti-human trafficking, and created organizations like Doctors Without Borders, Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and Institute for Global Engagement.

### What are its limits?

1. It's meant to reveal a snapshot of God from a historical and personal perspective. It's not a science book, geography book, or psychology book.
2. It's limited in that its main agenda is to point to the hope we all have in Christ, like a billboard or sign pointing to a restaurant. It's not meant to be the substance of Christ.

### How do you argue with the Bible?

1. Ask questions about it. Why does it say what it says?
2. Ask what different ways it can be interpreted. Literally? Mythologically? Practically? Metaphorically? Mystically?
3. What and Why do you disagree with it? And what is it in you that disagrees?
4. What did it mean to the first readers/hearers? Today?
5. Ask the Spirit what it meant, what it means, and what difference that makes.
6. Allow it to ask questions of you.

### How do we respond to the Bat Kol?

1. Mary, "how can this be?" (Luke 1:34)
2. Mary, "Amen, be it unto me as you say." (Luke 1:38)